

## Contributions

### MAKING LAWS

D. C. MOOMAW

I was interested in a question that was published in the *Gospel Messenger* lately asking, "Does the church have the authority to make laws?" It was answered negatively by editor J. H. Moore. "She does not have authority to make laws; but to interpret and enforce those which the Lord has made." This answer was strictly correct. A religious organization has no authority to make laws and when she makes them she usurps the prerogative of Christ in whom all power is placed, and she commits an act of treason to Him whose commission she claims to hear.

But let us see whether editor Moore is right in his disclaimer. The law of Christ by St. Paul says a woman's head must be covered when she prays, and he says it to Corinthian women who were accustomed to cutting off their hair and he says specifically that the hair was given her for a covering. Editor Moore's church has made an amendment to that law by requiring the sisters to wear an artificial covering and that covering *must* be a *white cap*. So arbitrarily is this law enforced that a woman would not be baptized who would refuse to promise to wear it, unless the baptizer would violate the law of his church. Editor Moore's church interprets Paul's law to mean a white cap, that and nothing else. Again, the divine law says we should not be conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and that we should be a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Brother Moore's church interprets that to mean certain *specific* methods of combing the hair, and a certain *specific* method or style of cutting the outer coat of men and the wearing of the bonnet by women, that, and nothing else, and these interpretations change with the changing years. It is the law of the church accompanied with awful penalties where congregations choose to enforce it. Expulsion, degradation, and other penalties follow its violation. The divine law says our apparel should not be costly, but Brother Moore's church has no official interpretation of that law. It says we should not lay up treasures on earth, but there is no interpretation and no penalty for its violation. It says our conversation should not be with covetousness but in heaven; but interpretations are silent and there is no penalty.

Thus we see the anomaly of interpretations and penalties with regard to scriptures of doubtful meaning and addressed to the conscience, and none where they are *specific* and *mandatory*. Can the astute editor explain the appar-

ent incongruity. It might not be amiss to suggest to him that the church of our Lord has not commissioned us to interpret the Word. An old brother was once asked by a pert college fledgeling how he interpreted a certain scripture. "I do not interpret God's word, I believe and obey it," was the sententious reply. I commend the answer to modern interpreters.

How will Brother Moore explain the phenomenon of the changes and contradictions that exist in his book of interpretations, the minutes of A. M.? One year there is one interpretation, another year there is another, and that contradictory to the first. Which interpretation is from the Lord, if either, and which of men? It is also noticed that no interpretation lives longer than the generation that produced it. Can Brother Moore explain? Of course he will not let the light of truth and fact and experience shine thro his paper. He and his people are not accustomed to noticing criticisms coming from their progressive brethren. If he can get his readers to believe that his church does not make laws, with every characteristic that constitutes laws, it should be no concern of ours, but we will be excused if we indulge in an occasional criticism. It pains us to see a simple minded, confiding people so studiously deceived. Let the light shine.

I would like to ask Editor Moore a few questions, and I would like to have him answer them thro the G. M.

1. Is it not the law of the church that no woman is a loyal member who does not wear a bonnet?
2. Is it not the law of his church that no woman is a loyal member, in full fellowship, who does not wear a white cap?
3. Is it not the law of his church that a brother shall not take part in A. M. work who does not wear a cutaway coat with a standing collar?
4. Is it not the law of his church that a brother cannot be a delegate to A. M. or D. M. who does not wear such a coat or who uses tobacco?
5. Is it not the law of his church to wash feet by the so-called double mode and to abstain from musical instruments and from missionary work, prayer meetings, Sunday schools, revival meetings, etc.

The list might be extended over pages but these will suffice. If these are not laws what constitutes laws? If these were interpretations of scripture, please refer to the scriptures so interpreted. I will ask a few more questions:

6. Is it not the law of his church that no brother can be ordained to or be accepted to perform any official function who does not conform to a specific style of dress prescribed by A. M., known as "The Order?"
7. Is it not the law of his church to

make the validity of baptism to depend on the qualifications of the administrator and not on that of the subject?

8. Does not the law of his church forbid the recognition of any minister of the gospel however scriptural his preaching and practice who does not walk with them?

If editor Moore is perfectly assured of the stability of his position he will not hesitate to answer these questions fully and candidly thro the G. M. If he does not it will be conclusive evidence that he knows his position is defenseless and that he wants to continue the deception.

### THE SELF EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

C. H. BALSBAUGH

*My Dear Brother:*—Your letter is not only long, but also harrowing. I have no complaint against its length, but its character pains me. You are a truly miserable man, and there is only One who can help you. What you see and feel today should have been your experience before you entered the church. Your views of Christianity have been utterly fallacious. You mistook the symbols of grace for salvation, while you had no acquaintance with the blessed virtues they represent. This is the deplorable case of a great multitude. Thank God, your eyes are opening, and you are beginning to see that Christianity means nothing less than "God manifest in the flesh."

Man is so corrupted and perverse that nothing less than omnipotence can restore him to his pristine purity and integrity. And this restoration is necessarily subjective; God must become incarnate in each individual that is to be redeemed. The embodiment of God in Christ is provisional; the repetition of this mystery in us is personal salvation. This necessity you now deeply feel, but know not how to attain. You cannot become a Christian in any other way than that by which the Son of God became Jesus—by the Holy Ghost. Christianity is not simply a system of transcendent ethics. It is Divinity taking up His abode in humanity. True conversion needs no other authentication than itself. Jesus never questioned the divine lineage. He knew that He was God. Not a whit less pronounced is the testimony of the Christian. "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His spirit." I John 4:13, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of His." Rom. 8:9, "Because I live, ye shall live also. Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." John 14:19, 20.

Our spiritual pedigree is as undeniable as our natural. The half of Christendom falter in this testimony, but this only reveals how true to facts is the parable of the ten virgins. Any one that is born